

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

The Westbrass Company

California Manufacturing Technology Consulting

The Westbrass Company Estimates a \$2.5 Million Sales Increase

Client Profile:

The Westbrass Company began its operations 69 years ago. They are a minority owned business located in an economically challenged area of Los Angeles, California. Their team of 20 employees distributes plumbing fixtures and fittings to kitchen and bath showrooms, plumbing wholesalers and supply houses. Annual sales in 2003 were \$4.5 million.

Situation:

The Westbrass Company's management began to reposition the company to market to large mass-market hardware stores, thus increasing their business at least two-fold. In doing so, they realized that their 15-year-old legacy system would not be suitable to carry them to the operating level required to double their sales. With this in mind, they selected a distribution focused Enterprise Resource Planning system. In selecting the system, however, they realized that external assistance in project management, as well as facilitating organizational change as the new system was implemented, was required. They engaged with California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to provide implementation project management, as well as software and lean enterprise training.

Solution:

The Westbrass Company requested CMTC's assistance in implementing the new software. Along with implementing the software, they wished to utilize CMTC's knowledge of lean enterprise concepts. A project plan for the implementation that included lean training was developed by CMTC. The project utilized CMTC's proprietary implementation methodology, taking the Westbrass Company through a planning, design, test, and cut-over phased approach. By utilizing this approach, the Westbrass Company was able to implement the software despite their resource constraints. The implementation of the new software system and the application of the lean techniques learned in the training shortened their order processing time, from the time an order is received to the time it is shipped, from an average of three to four days to within one day. The new system allowed the management team to get real-time information for strategic management decisions. Additionally, they are now better positioned to engage with major hardware chain clients to take the Westbrass company to an expected 50 to 75 percent growth expansion in the next year.

Results:

- * Reduced order processing time from 4 days to 1 day.
- * Increased sales of \$2.5 million expected over 2-year period.
- * Anticipated 50 percent to 75 percent expansion in growth next year.
- * Anticipated 45 percent increase in productivity.

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* Anticipated creation of 10 new jobs.

Testimonial:

"CMTC helped us become more competitive. We increased productivity 45 percent."

Max Homami, President